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ABSTRACT

This curriculum is designed to assist Catholic school teachers and parish catechists in their efforts to foster a pro-life attitude in students in grades 5 and 6. Following an introduction is the curriculum, which features six lessons. These are: (1) The miracle of life around us; (2) Respect for all life; (3) The miracle of human life; (4) Abortion and the facts; (5) Abortion and the right to life; and (6) Choose life. Student handouts are included in the lessons, and a series of fetal development visuals are appended. (DB)

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Choose Life!

UNBORN CHILDREN AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Intermediate Level

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Choose Life!

UNBORN CHILDREN AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Intermediate Level: Grades 5-6

BROWN ROA Publishing Media
NCEA

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Dr. William E. May
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Imprimatur
✠ James Cardinal Hickey, S.T.D., J.C.D.
Archbishop of Washington
July 30, 1991

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Foreword

It was on the occasion of an early meeting of the then newly forming National Federation for Life that Sister Catherine T. McNamee, C.S.J., President of the National Catholic Educational Association, made a gracious and welcome offer. She told me that the NCEA would be willing to develop pro-life curricular materials. In my judgment, that offer was of immense importance, and I was deeply gratified when Father Francis D. Kelly, Executive Director of the NCEA's Department of Religious Education, accepted the responsibility to see the project through. The Knights of Malta American Association President, Mr. J. Peter Grace, guaranteed the funding needed. The results speak for themselves.

Much as I, personally, have believed that the permissive laws of our nation and our states regarding abortion categorically must be changed, even more crucial a need is that minds and hearts be educated to understand the sacredness of every human person as made in the image and likeness of God. No law can ever make morally right the deliberate, direct destruction of **any** innocent human life. That is a moral absolute. Millions of people, including the young, have come to believe that whatever the civil law permits must be acceptable. The entire orientation must be turned around. Without education, such will not happen.

I am deeply grateful to the NCEA and for all responsible for giving us an educational tool that has been critically needed for so long. I suspect that parents and teachers all over the country, and perhaps throughout the world, will share my gratitude.

John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
Chairman, NCCB Pro-Life Activities Committee

Preface

Catholic school religion teachers and parish catechists perform a precious and invaluable service for the faith life of tens of thousands of young people across the United States. Their efforts to fulfill the mandate of the Second Vatican Council "to foster a faith that is living, conscious and active" merit our admiration and support.

This pro-life curriculum is intended as a service and support for our teachers and catechists in their crucial efforts at moral catechesis to foster a pro-life attitude in those they teach.

Abortion is one of the great moral issues of our time. Tragically, we find that even some of our own Catholic people are confused by the dominance of relativism and subjectivism in our culture. The result is that the absolute value of life and the clarity of God's will in this issue are obscured for them.

The moral issue of abortion is a litmus test for the application of Christian moral principles. Catechists and religion teachers should be willing to speak out for the unborn and emphasize the principle of the absolute sanctity of human life. The fact that 1.6 million abortions are committed every year in our country is a national scandal. One wonders what judgement the prophets of the Old Testament would forbode if they were witnesses to such evil. Are we not called to a prophetic role in our day?

In the face of this clear moral evil religious educators are neglectful if they do not present these principles to their students. To assist teachers, the NCEA in conjunction with BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, has prepared these materials with the assistance of a wide spectrum of theologians, health care professionals, curriculum experts, etc. I express my gratitude to those listed in this publication as critical reviewers for the time and care they gave in helping develop this resource.

In a special way, I express my personal gratitude to His Eminence, John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York and chairman of the United States Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities for his support and for the leadership he has given to this cause; to Mr. J. Peter Grace and the Knights of Malta, whose generous and indispensable contribution contributed to the writing and publication of these materials; and, finally, to Mr. Ernest T. Nedder, President of BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, and Sandra Hirstein, whose openness to such a project and whose professional skills have been crucial in bringing it to realization.

It is now our prayerful hope that the teachers and catechists who use this resource may find it a sensitive and effective means of helping our Catholic young people understand the beauty, truth and nobility of the Church's teaching about respect for human life.

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Introduction

In February of 1990, in Washington, DC, bishops, catechetical leaders, and publishers heard the need expressed for a curriculum specifically aimed at helping young Catholics understand and heed the Church's teaching on abortion. As a result of that expressed need, the National Catholic Education Association, under the leadership of Rev. Francis D. Kelly, in conjunction with BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, decided to act. NCEA determined to sponsor the development of curriculum resources designed to present in clear and certain terms the Church's teaching on abortion and the right to life of unborn children.

While fully aware of the importance of seeing the Church's teaching on abortion as but one part of its teaching on the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death (a "consistent life ethic" as it has been termed), those involved in the development of this teaching resource also recognized the particular need that exists among Catholics for specific education regarding the issue of abortion. Why is there a particular need for education on this issue? It is because, as the bishops of the United States have reminded us, abortion is a pivotal issue.

"Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. In a society where the innocent unborn are killed wantonly, how can we expect people to feel righteous revulsion at the act or threat of killing noncombatants in war?" ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 285)

The Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge. "Hence it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

It is very important that Catholic young people have the opportunity to focus upon and understand the Church's teaching on this fundamental and foundational issue.

For this reason, *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* has a consciously limited scope. It has four specific goals:

- To promote recognition of the unborn as human beings
- To promote respect for all human life, particularly the unborn
- To promote responsibility to care for those who are most defenseless, particularly unborn children
- To promote greater awareness of the scientific, historical, social, and moral information pertinent to the unborn

Contained within these four goals are six principles. Our objective is to help young Catholics recognize and act in light of these truths:

1. Every human being is a unique person made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, at every stage of life, every human being is important, deserving of care, and has a right to life.
2. Human life begins at conception—not at birth nor at any other arbitrary point beyond conception.
3. Human development is a continuous, gradual process that begins at conception and lasts throughout life.
4. Abortion is the intentional removal of an unborn human child from its mother so as to kill the human life already begun.

5. Abortion is contrary to the prime goal of human society which is "to protect human rights and secure basic justice for all members of society." ("Economic Justice for All," no. 122)

6. God's will is that people choose life, and not destroy it; therefore the Church opposes abortion and supports many alternatives to abortion.

The desired outcomes of the curriculum are listed below. It is hoped that, after using *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life,* that young Catholics will be able to do the following:

1 Respect for Human Life

- Explain what it means to be a unique human being.
- Explain why the right to life is a human right.
- Tell what the Bible says about life in the womb. (See Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139; Luke 1:39–44.)
- Name some ways in which the community supports and cares for pregnant women and families and children in need.
- Tell what "to respect life" means.

2 Beginning of Human Life

- Explain how human life is special among all other life.
- Tell when human life begins.
- Define *conception* and describe what happens immediately after conception.
- Explain the special responsibility that accompanies our capacity to cooperate with God in bringing new human beings into existence.

3 Gestation of Human Life

- Tell where and how the developing baby grows.
- Describe stages of fetal development.
- Describe the capabilities of unborn babies.
- Describe what unborn babies can feel (or experience).
- Compare the capabilities of an unborn baby with a newborn.

4 Destruction of Human Life

- Tell what abortion is.
- Give some important statistics regarding abortion.
- Describe the major methods of abortion.
- Describe complications associated with abortion.
- Explain why the Church holds abortion to be a most abhorrent moral evil.

5 Social Care of Human Life

- Describe ways in which our society promotes anti-life attitudes.
- Explain why a society committed to the defense of human rights and dignity must establish a structure of justice that provides legal protection for all human beings—from conception onward.
- Explain the Supreme Court decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* and why a Christian response to the court's decisions would be to overturn them.
- Compare the Supreme Court's position on abortion to the Court's pre-Civil War position on slavery.
- Explain why abortion is not a realistic solution to the following social problems: "unwanted children," teen pregnancy, rape, incest, and overpopulation.
- Explain why abortion is not simply a private matter.

6 Protection of Human Life

- Explain the Church's opposition to abortion and its response to the major arguments of abortion-rights groups.
- List the Christian values that are violated by abortion.
- Name alternatives to abortion.
- List the ways the Church supports pro-life activities.
- Describe the goals of the Right-to-Life movement and describe ways to spread the pro-life message.

This resource book is one of three books that form the total curriculum. It is designed for students in grades 5–6. Similar resource books have been designed for children in grades 7–8 or 9–12. Each resource book contains:

- a general introduction to the resource book
- suggestions as to how the curriculum might be infused into other curriculum areas (for example, science, health, family life, human sexuality, and other related areas)
- 6 lesson plans per level (for approximately 30 to 45 minutes of class time)
- black line activities, handouts, and such, for in-class or take-home use
- parent involvement suggestions

Those involved in the development of *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* hope that, by educating young people about the issue of the right-to-life of unborn children, greater respect for the value of all human life will result. As the bishops of the United States have said:

In focusing attention on the sanctity of human life, therefore, we hope to generate a greater respect for the life of each person in our society. We are confident that greater respect for human life will result from continuing the public discussion of abortion and from efforts to shape our laws so as to protect the life of all persons, including the unborn. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities")

Lesson Plans, Methods, and Resources

The structure of *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* has been designed with the needs of teachers in mind. To help teachers quickly recognize the content and methodology involved in each lesson, the same simple overview begins each lesson presentation.

Lesson Number	Title
Objective	Identifies the content addressed in the lesson and a hoped-for student behavior
Summary	Provides an overview of the concepts covered in the lesson, together with the procedures for presenting the content
Time	Alerts teacher to the time needed for presenting the lesson
Teacher Preparation	Informs the teacher about the materials and/or resources needed for teaching the lesson
Procedure	Summarizes, in step-by-step fashion, the procedures and activities that make up the lesson
Evaluation	Suggests an activity that allows the teacher to determine whether students understand the concept and can demonstrate the behavior defined in the objective
Enrichment	Suggests optional activities for further developing concepts within the lesson

Following the overview, there is a teacher background essay. This essay, while hardly exhaustive, provides a concise explanation of the main ideas to be presented in the body of the lesson.

Immediately after the essay is a step-by-step description of the teaching procedure for the lesson. The teaching procedure follows a fairly standard format:

- an introductory activity to generate interest and involvement in the topic
- the presentation of the main ideas for the lesson
- further exploration and clarification of the main ideas
- a suggested activity for applying the main ideas in some practical way

A closing prayer is provided to conclude the lesson procedure. Following the closing prayer is an optional home activity, designed to reinforce the lesson and to foster parent involvement in the learning process.

Each lesson also provides teachers with the handouts and work sheets they will need as they teach each lesson. These black-line masters may be duplicated as needed.

While it is not necessary to follow the lesson plans slavishly, teachers should remain true to the basic aim and content of each lesson. Adapt them to your local circumstances, to your own teaching style, to the availability of resources, and to the readiness and ability of your students. For example, if you are able to obtain a guest speaker who is an expert on the topic to be covered (for example, a doctor who is willing to describe current abortion methods); adapt that lesson plan accordingly.

A basic methodology, generally regarded as an effective teaching/learning model, is used in the lesson plans. There is a balance of student involvement and teacher input, as well as a balance of group activity and individual work/reflection. The lessons also attempt to provide a balance of left-brain, analytic activities with right-brain imaging and creative activities. It is presumed that the lessons in this teaching resource will be taught in this general manner and not be reduced to a series of "lectures."

Each lesson, as presented in this resource, is a complete teaching package. No additional resources are required. However, several optional resources are identified in each lesson. All the films/videos are pertinent to the topic of the lesson. If available to you, they can be used in place of, or as a reinforcement of, your own presentation. Likewise, the suggested print material is very informative and attractively printed, often including highly effective graphics. These can be used to teach the main ideas of the lesson or as reinforcement. If time and budget allow, seriously consider acquiring some of these print materials to use with the lessons for which they are suggested. Also, do not hesitate to seek the service of outside speakers if any are available to you. Your diocesan Respect Life or Family Life office may be able to provide you with a list of speakers in your area who are experts on one or another of the topics contained in these lessons.
NOTE: The factual information and data (statistics and so forth) contained in the lesson plan materials represent what was available when the lesson plans were developed. Given the contemporary nature of the abortion issue, new data and new findings from scientific studies appear regularly. Also, national statistics may not reflect realities in your local community. It is important to point this out to your students. As you become aware of new data of a reliable nature, adjust the data in these lessons accordingly. Finally, because the abortion issue is very contemporary and controversial, it receives much news coverage on a regular basis. Whenever possible, integrate current stories into these lessons, especially if they deal with the issue at the local level.

Integrating *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* into the present curriculum given the life-and-death urgency of the abortion issue, as well as its timely nature, there is no need to make excuses for including it in the curriculum of any Catholic school or religious education program. It fits logically, of course, within the religion curriculum under a variety of topics: for example, within the teaching of the Ten Commandments and specifically the Fifth Commandment; within a course on the Church's teachings on social justice; within any course on morality and ethics; and within a course on marriage, family, and parenting. It also fits logically within a course on sexuality education. It could easily be included in a biology course that deals with human reproduction. There is a close connection between this Unit and various subjects covered in history, civics, and social sciences—in so far as these deal with basic human rights and the government's obligation to protect these rights. These subjects would include slavery in the United States, the Jewish Holocaust under Nazi Germany, or the nature of human freedom and the basic rights of citizens.

Therefore, it should not be difficult to find an appropriate place to integrate *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* into your existing curriculum. There is one word of caution. The material has been developed precisely as a Unit—that is, the lessons build upon one another. Thus, it will be most effective when the lessons are presented fairly close to each other. Presenting one lesson a week for six consecutive weeks, for example, would afford the students time to assimilate and integrate the material, while also allowing them to connect each lesson with the previous one. The effectiveness of the lessons will be diminished if the interval between them is too lengthy.

Parental Involvement

The primacy of the role of parents in the religious education of their children, especially in those areas related to human sexuality has been widely fostered by the Church in documents such as *Educational Guidance in Human Love* by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1983). Those who implement any program related to human sexuality, such as the *Choose Life!* program must always keep the primacy of parents in mind.

Parents should be directly involved in the decision to implement the *Choose Life!* curriculum in their school or parish. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of supporting parents in those responsibilities related to human sexuality education, and parents will support teachers and programs that help them in this task.

Not all parents are well versed in the Church's position on abortion. Many need assistance in working with this issue. The *Choose Life!* program can serve as a vehicle to help both parents and children better understand the foundational and fundamental nature of the right to life issue.

In relation to the primacy of the parental role, the educational institution has a duty to parents. This duty has a number of dimensions:

1. The duty to involve the parents from the very beginning in the choice of the program and the choice of instructors, and to provide the parents with a means of ongoing communication and evaluation.

2. The duty to provide parents with clear, concise explanations of what is being done in the program.

3. The duty to provide parents with an opportunity to deepen their own understanding of the Church's position on unborn children and the right to life. The formation of parents in regard to this issue is varied. They will appreciate the opportunity to learn what the program can offer.

4. The duty to assure parents that the program is truly consistent with the position of the Church on the fundamental issue of right to life by providing them with access to the resources relevant to the program.

5. The duty to involve parents during the course of the program and to seek out their feedback, so that it might be integrated into the lesson planning process.

In helping parents to deepen their own understanding and helping them to take responsibility for helping their children better understand this vital issue, the school or parish fulfills its own responsibilities. All involved thus benefit.

Organizations

The following national organizations are an excellent source of background materials, current statistics and various teacher aids. They can also provide information concerning regional offices in your area.

Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth St., NE
Washington, DC 20017

National Right to Life Committee
419 7th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004

National Right to Life Committee:
Education Trust
417 7th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Your diocesan Respect Life and/or Family Life office (Most diocesan Respect Life agencies maintain a library of pro-life materials, teacher aids, and audio-visuals. Most also maintain a speakers' bureau.)

Publishers

The following publishers have a strong commitment to the pro-life movement and will provide a current catalogue of books, materials, teacher aids, and audio-visuals.

Life-Cycle Books
PO Box 792
Lewiston, NY 14092–0792

Hayes Publishing, Inc.
6304 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, VA 22090

Easton Publishing Company
PO Box 1064
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Ignatius Press
15 Oakland Avenue
Harrison, NY 10528

Liturgical Press
Collegeville, MN 56321

Church Documents

From the Vatican

"Declaration on Abortion," Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, November 18, 1974.

"Educational Guidance in Human Love," Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, March, 1983.

"Christifidelis Laici," Pope John Paul II, December 30, 1988.

From the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

"Statement on Abortion," April 22, 1970.

"Declaration on Abortion," November 18, 1970.

"Pastoral Message on Abortion," February 13, 1973.

"Resolution on the Pro-Life Constitutional Amendment," November 13, 1973.

"Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," November 20, 1975.

"Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation," November 14, 1985.

"Resolution on Abortion," November 1989.

"Human Sexuality, A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning," February, 1991.

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Abortion Information for Classroom Teachers, National Right to Life Committee Educational Trust.

First Nine Months of Life by Geraldine Lux Flanagan (Simon and Schuster).

Life Magazine Reprint #27: "Life Before Birth," Time-Life Multi-Media, Paramus, NJ.

Abortion: The Silent Holocaust, Fr. John Powell, SJ, Argus Communications, Dallas, TX.

Handbook on Abortion, Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, Hayes Publications, Cincinnati, OH.

Let's Talk to Teens About Chastity, Molly Kelly, The Center for Learning, Rocky River, OH.

Respect Life Program Manual (Published Annually), National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC.

To Rescue the Future: The Pro-Life Movement in the 1980s, David Andrusko, Life-Cycle Books, Lewiston, NY.

The Least of These, Curt Young, Moody Press, Chicago, IL.

"We are the People Who Believe in Life" and "100 Years of Catholic Social Teachings," *Catholic Update* Reprints, St. Anthony Press, Cincinnati, OH.

Pamphlets

"Abortion: Question and Answers," Cardinal John O'Connor, Archdiocese of New York, July 1990.

Videos

"Abortion: Does Anyone Really Care?" Rev. John Powell, Franciscan Communications.

"Abortion, It's Legal, Common, and Wrong," Don Bosco Multimedia.

"Abortion, the Time Is Now," Don Bosco Multimedia.

"Downs Syndrome Blessing," Womanity.

"The Story of Mary Jo," Credence Cassettes.

"Teens and Chastity," Molly Kelly, Don Bosco Multimedia

"Abortion Issues," Molly Kelly, Don Bosco Multimedia

Lesson One
Overview

The Miracle of Life Around Us

Objectives

Students will become more sensitive to the miracle of life that surrounds them. They will be able to explain that:

- All life has its origin in God.
- Only God can create life.
- Human beings are created in God's image and likeness.

Summary

In this lesson students will examine different life forms and identify the various qualities they possess. They will become more aware of the number and variety of life forms around them.

Time

30–40 minutes.

Teacher Preparation/Materials

A large stone, a bag of peanuts in the shell, copies of student handouts, a Bible, paper and pencils

Procedure

Introductory questions and student discussion, teacher input, completion of worksheets, a reading from Scripture, the composition of haiku, homework assignment

Evaluation

The students' ability to write appropriately expressive haikus will illustrate the degree to which they have grasped the main concept of the lesson.

Resources for Lesson Enrichment

William (film/video)
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Cosmic Zoom (film)
McGraw-Hill Films
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Bacteria Serving Human Science (film)
Science Screen Report
1000 Clint Moore Road
Boca Raton, FL 33428

Lesson One

Teacher Background

The Miracle of Life Around Us

This lesson is foundational for the entire unit. The objective is simple enough but it is also very challenging. You want to awaken in the students a sense of wonder at the miracle and mystery of all life, from its simplest forms to its most complex. The challenge lies in the fact that we are so surrounded by life that we tend to take it for granted.

What we tend to forget as a result is that, for all our intelligence and technology, we humans are powerless to manufacture a single living cell. All life as we know it has its origins in the original creative action of God, the Creator of life. Whenever we destroy a life form we have no power to manufacture another to replace the unique one lost. It is lost forever. We humans have not discovered life anywhere else in this entire, seemingly infinite universe. The only place we *know* that life exists is on our tiny, fragile planet. Life within our universe is a very precious, fragile gift.

So life on earth is actually a continual miracle and a continual reminder of God's presence and power. All life forms on earth, being so rare in our vast universe, are very precious gifts. We human beings are called upon to reverence and cherish them. Especially we are called to reverence and cherish human beings, whom God has created in God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26–27).

As you share these ideas with your students, it will be important that you strive to exhibit an appropriate sense of awe and reverence. While the lesson should be interesting and fun, it should also have a certain prayerful quality to it.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin class by displaying the large stone on your desk and giving each student a peanut. Then ask this question: "How many ways can you think of in which the peanut you are holding differs from this stone on my desk?"

• As students give their answers, write them on the board (weight, color, size, taste, smell, and so on). Continue until one student identifies the essential difference—namely, that the peanut has life or the potential for life and the stone does not.

• Then write LIFE on the board in large letters. Continue by asking some of the following questions: "What does it mean to say the peanut 'has life'? What 'life'? Why can it begin to grow? Where does this power to grow come from ?"

• Allow students time to wrestle with these questions and to offer various answers. Comment appropriately on the answers.

Present Main Ideas

• After sufficient time exploring in this general way the idea of life, ask students to name some of the uses we have for the peanut. (Besides obvious answers like peanut butter, the peanut is a major source for cooking oil and protein in much of the Third World.) Now present this situation: "Imagine that some disease destroyed all the peanut plants on earth. You are now holding the very last peanut in existence. How important do you think that peanut would be for humanity? Why?"

• Help students arrive at the conclusion that this one peanut, because it contains the potential for life within it, could be the source for replenishing peanuts throughout the world. If it were destroyed we would never have peanut products on earth again.

Now briefly explain these ideas in terms suitable to the capacities of the class:

a. The most important thing on earth, in any form, is life itself, because life is the one thing we humans cannot manufacture no matter how much science and technology we possess.

b. All life, from the tiniest seed or single living cell to the most complex life forms on earth, has its origin in God. Only God can create life.

c. In a real sense, every single life form is a miracle. It is a visible proof of the power and creative presence of God.

d. It is important to realize that whenever any life form becomes extinct, it is lost forever. No human power can ever bring it back.

• Distribute Handout 1.1. Explain how life forms progress from the very simple to the most complex. Ask students if they can "classify" (numbers 1–6) each of the following: ant, orchid, worm, spider, fish, whale, snail, honey bee, porpoise. Ask students to describe some of the special skills or "intelligence" that some of these higher life forms possess. Afterwards, stress that even the lowest, one-cell life forms are still unique and special, much higher in the order of creation than all the stars in the universe. One amoeba is more "miraculous" than a million suns!

Explore Further

• Form the class into groups of three. Provide each group with a "Life around Us" worksheet. Ask groups to work together to complete the worksheet.

• Each group reads its completed list. A group gets one point for each life form it identified that no other group mentioned. The group with the most "original" life forms is the winner.

Apply

• Explain that a *haiku* is a short "word picture" of three lines. The first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the last line has five syllables. Provide an example such as:

All life is a gift,
A big, wonderful surprise.
Thanks to God who gives!

• Explain that you are now going to read a short passage from the Bible, describing how God created the world. Students are to listen carefully. Afterwards, each student is to attempt to compose a haiku about God's act of creating life.

• Now read reverently the Creation account found in Genesis 1:1–31.

• Review again the nature of a haiku and ask students to attempt to write one on their impressions of God's act of the creation of life. You might also ask the students to summarize the Scripture in an illustration. Or, for students who have difficulty with skills in syllabication, use another poetic form.

• After sufficient time, ask volunteers to read their haikus. Comment and praise appropriately. You may wish to collect all the haikus afterwards and post them on the bulletin board to serve as a reminder of the lesson. (Note: The content rather than the quality of the haikus will give you a good idea of how well the students have begun to appreciate the miracle of all life around them.)

• Close lesson with a prayerful reading of Psalm 8. Give each child a copy of Handout 1.3. Divide the children into two groups. Have them pray the Psalm as indicated on Handout 1.3.

Optional Home Activity

• Ask students, with the help of their parents, to draw up a list of all life forms they can find in their home, including those objects that came from life forms. They should bring the list to the next class. (Note: Done properly, this could be a very extensive list, one which provides an excellent reinforcement of the concept of the abundance and variety of life that surrounds us constantly.)

Handout 1.1 Life Forms

Life on our earth exists in many forms, from the most simple single-cell life form to the most complex and intelligent of all living beings on earth, we humans. Here are some of the steps that life takes as it moves from simple to complex forms:

1. Single-cell life forms can take nourishment, divide, and reproduce themselves.

2. Even simple multi-cell life forms like a blade of grass can organize their cells into different systems (roots, stems, leaves) that work together for the good of the whole.

3. Animals are higher life forms than plants because they have the ability to move about (locomotion) and reproduce themselves sexually by some form of mating.

4. Animals also have one or more of the five senses: feeling, sight, hearing, smell, and taste. The higher the animal is on the ladder, the more senses it has and the more developed these senses are.

5. All animals have a kind of "intelligence" or special skills which enable them to adapt and survive in their environment. Most groups of higher animals also have developed a special "language" or ways to communicate with their own species. Some of these "languages" can be quite complex.

6. We humans are unique and special among all forms of life because God has created us to be like Him. We are the only creatures on earth who can know the truth and make free choices. We can do so because we, alone of all bodily creatures, are made in the image and likeness of God. Moreover, in Jesus Christ, God became a human being so that we might share in divine life forever. All life is good, but human life is precious. Human life, which is bodily in character, has God as its direct cause insofar as the animating principle of human life is a spiritual, immortal soul, which confers upon the human person, who is a living human body, the God-like spiritual capacities of intellect and free will.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

. . . . Human life is a precious gift from God. . . . Recognition of the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, lies at the very heart of our individual and social duty to respect human life. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," no. 2)

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Handout 1.2 Life around Us

Instructions: List 25 life forms present in this classroom (besides the teacher and students) that are either alive right now or have come from living things. (For example, the rubber of your pencil eraser came from a rubber tree!)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.
18.
19.
20.
21.
22.
23.
24.
25.

Compare your group list with other group lists. Circle those life forms which others have also listed. Count up the life forms not crossed out.

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Handout 1.3 Choral Prayer: Psalm 8 God's Glory, People's Dignity

All: O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

Group 1: O Lord, our Lord,
how glorious is your name over all the earth!
You have exalted your majesty above the heavens.

Group 2: Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings
you have fashioned praise because of your foes,
to silence the hostile and the vengeful.

Group 1: When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars which you set in place—

Group 2: What is man that you should be mindful of him,
or the son of man that you should care for him?

Group 1: You have made him little less than the angels,
and crowned him with glory and honor.

Group 2: You have made him little less than the angels,
and crowned him with glory and honor.

Group 1: You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
putting all things under his feet:

Group 2: All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field.

Group 1: The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea,
and whatever swims the path of the seas.

All: O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

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Lesson Two Overview

Respect for All Life

Objective

Students will become aware that respect for life has both a physical and a spiritual dimension.

Summary

After examining different forms of physical pollution and the effect it has on physical life on our planet, students will examine various ways we "pollute" or fail to respect human life and dignity through our acceptance of violence.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Aerosol can, styrofoam cup, plastic bottle, newspaper, pesticide bottle, picture of a big car, several copies of a current weekly television guide, copies of student handouts, a Bible. Optional: plain contact paper, magic markers or crayons

Procedure

Opening activity and student discussion, teacher input, development of definition of a consistent life ethic, evaluation of TV offerings, closing prayer

Evaluation

Students will display knowledge of the concept of a consistent life ethic by developing a definition of the concept.

Resources for Lesson Enrichment

Refuse Recycling (film)
Science Screen Report
1000 Clint Moore Road
Boca Raton, FL 33432

A Mouse's Tale (video)
Cathedral Films
P. O. Box 4029
Westlake Village, CA 91359

A Day in the Life of America (video)
AIMS Media
6901 Woodley
Van Nuys, CA 91406

Lesson Two

Teacher Background

Respect for All Life

There is an obvious connection between the first lesson's emphasis on the wonder and miracle of all life and this lesson's emphasis on the need to respect all life. Fifth and sixth grade students today usually have a rather good knowledge about pollution and the harmful effect it is having on our earth's physical environment. That makes a good starting point for helping them expand their awareness to other, more serious kinds of "pollution" and the harmful effect they are having on human life.

One of the worst of these is the violence which seems to have become a hallmark of modern society. It is so pervasive that many children are becoming immured to it. For example, before your students are sixteen, they will have observed over 7,000 homicides in TV shows and movies. Polls tell us that professional wrestling—which is essentially glorified violence—is one of this age group's favorite television shows. The children therefore need help in recognizing the close connection that exists between violence as a form of entertainment and an overall lack of respect for human life.

As the Bishops of the United States have said, ". . . No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human life (Jas 4:1–2). When we accept violence in any form as commonplace, our sensitivities become dulled. When we accept violence, war itself can be taken for granted.

"Violence has many faces: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and pornography, neglect or abuse of the aged and the helpless, and innumerable other acts of inhumanity." ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284)

It needs to be stressed that other forms of lack of respect for human life and human dignity that abound in our society are closely tied to our tolerance for violence in general: racism, verbal and emotional

abuse, sexism, and indifference to the suffering of the poor, the homeless, and the elderly. However, our society does not glorify these in the same way it glorifies violence nor does our society use them as forms of entertainment. Instead, society generally ignores these evidences of lack of respect for life, striving to keep them out of sight and, therefore, out of mind.

Because of the age of the students, you need to handle this topic with some care. The lesson is not intended to be a shocker. Rather, the goal is to appeal to their natural sensitivity at this age and help them realize the importance of developing a consistent ethic of life. A consistent ethic of life is held by those who have an attitude of *total reverence for life.*

Respect for life is an attitude that embraces concern for all forms of life and all people. It opposes whatever threatens to cheapen or destroy human life and dignity. It opposes, in particular, direct abortion, which destroys human life at its most vulnerable stage.

The Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge. "Hence it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

It is very important that Catholic young people understand the Church's teaching on this fundamental and foundational issue.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

- If you gave the optional homework assignment mentioned in the first lesson, begin class by asking students to share their work.

- Review briefly the main point of the previous lesson that all life is precious and, in a real sense, miraculous.

- Now hold up without comment each of the following items in turn: an aerosol spray can, a styrofoam cup or container, a plastic bottle, a newspaper, a pesticide container, a picture of a large car. After displaying the items, ask this question: "What do you think all of these items have in common?"

The desired answer is that they all in some way or another waste natural resources, harm our environment, cause pollution, and threaten life on our planet when used improperly or unwisely.

When the idea of pollution is given, ask students to name some of the kinds of environmental pollution or destruction of natural resources they know about. List these on the board as they are given. Then ask students to try to rank those listed, starting with what they consider the most harmful and moving toward the less harmful. There is no need to try to arrive at a "correct" listing or ranking. Responses can simply reflect the students' present awareness and understanding of the issue.

Present Main Ideas

- After students have arrived at a reasonable list and some kind of ranking, ask them this question: "There is another kind of pollution that is actually far more serious and threatening to life on our planet than any of those you listed. Can you think of what it might be?"

- If the students do not guess the answer in a reasonable time, provide it. Tell them it is a kind of moral or spiritual pollution: namely, the spread of violence in society and our acceptance of it.

- Proceed to illustrate all the ways in which violence has crept into our lives and has been accepted as normal:

a. Violence (physical, verbal, emotional) is a major theme of many of our most popular TV dramas.

b. Violence is glorified in professional boxing and wrestling especially, but it also is becoming a regular part of other professional athletic events.

c. Many of the big movie hits have stories that evolve around violence.

- Now make the connection between this "entertainment" violence —which creates the idea that we human beings are disposable—and some of the ways in which our society, in fact, tends to treat human life as cheap and unimportant:

a. During the time of this class, several hundred children no older than themselves will have died of starvation in Third World nations. (Over a thousand die every day!)

b. There are over a million homeless people wandering our streets right now. Again, many are children like themselves.

c. Half the people in the world will never have the opportunity to learn to read or write.

- Finally, explain that to have a real respect for life, we need to have a respect for *all* life. We must move beyond concern for the physical pollution of our environment to concern over the moral and spiritual pollution in society. We need to become concerned for protecting the lives and the dignity of *all* human beings, regardless of age, race, religion, or nationality.

Tell how the Bishops of the United States teach that human life is sacred and that God gives people the privilege and responsibility of protecting life. Point out that the Church teaches that ". . . whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person . . . all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society. . . . Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator" ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," no. 27).

Tell the children that the Church wants them to develop a consistent ethic of life. (An *ethic* is a moral standard.) A person who holds a consistent ethic of life

values human life at every stage of existence. Explain to the children that the Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge. Therefore, it must be protected above all others.

Explore Further

- After you have completed your presentation, ask students if they can help you come up with a good definition for "consistent life ethic." Allow students to work alone or in small groups to develop a definition. Have students share their ideas. Together, use the different ideas offered to develop a composite definition. After it is developed, write it on the board. Distribute "Consistent Life Ethic" handout to each student and have them copy the definition onto it.

Apply

- Form students into groups of three. Give out a copy of the weekly TV listings to each group and a copy of the "Bottom Ten" handout. Allow students to work in their groups to complete the worksheet.

- Ask groups to share results with class. Compare to see which shows make every group's list.

- Summarize lesson by re-reading the class's "consistent life ethic" definition and encouraging students to be on guard against the moral pollution they are being exposed to.

- End class with a prayerful reading of Psalm 85 (Handout 3). Note to the children that this Psalm paints a word-portrait of the Kingdom of God. If time allows have the children illustrate the Psalm.

Optional Home Activity

- Ask students to use plain contact paper and magic markers to design a bumper sticker that captures the "consistent life ethic" idea of respect for all life.

- Ask students to share their consistent life ethic definition with their parents and then post it in a prominent place in their home as a reminder for them to respect *all* life.

Handout 2.1 Consistent Life Ethic

The Church teaches a "consistent life ethic." This means . . .

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Handout 2.2 Bottom Ten

Instructions: With a weekly television guide as an aid, your group should list under column I what you consider the ten most "life-polluting" shows on TV, based on the amount of violence they contain and the general way they treat human life as cheap and unimportant. Number one should be the very worst, number two the next worst, and so forth. Under column II, list ten TV shows that do not contain violence and that show respect for human life. Number one should be the best show, number two the second best, and so on. Be prepared to explain to the class the reasons for your choices.

Column I	Column II
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

. . . . Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person . . . all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society. . . . Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," no. 27).

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Handout 2.3 Prayer: Psalm 85:8–14 The Peace of God's Kingdom

8. Show us, O Lord, your kindness,
and grant us your salvation.

9. I will hear what God proclaims;
the Lord—for he proclaims peace.
To his people, and to his faithful ones,
and to those who put in him their hope.

10. Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.

11. Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.

12. Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

13. The Lord himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.

14. Justice shall walk before him,
and salvation, along the way of his steps.

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Lesson Three
Overview

The Miracle of Human Life

Objective

Students will become familiar with the unique and marvelous development of the human being from conception on.

Summary

Students will study the development of the human being from the time of conception in order to illustrate that at no point can an abortion not be considered the destruction of a human being.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, stationery, a Bible

Procedure

Introductory quiz, teacher input, study of worksheet on the stages of the first nine months of development of a human being, composition of a letter to parents

Evaluation

Follow-up quiz at beginning of next class

Resources for Lesson Enrichment

When Life Begins (film)
McGraw-Hill Films
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

The Miracle of Birth (video)
In God's Image Serie
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Life Before Birth (filmstrip) or
Life Magazine Reprint #27
Time-Life Multi-Media
100 Eisenhower Drive
Paramus, NJ 07652

FETAL MODELS (Plastic models of various stages of fetal development)
Nasco, Inc.
901 Janesville St.
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Lesson Three

Teacher Background

The Miracle of Human Life

This is the central lesson of this teaching resource. The goal is to help students grasp that, from the time of conception, a unique human being is present and begins to develop in a truly marvelous way.

Within moments after the father's sperm cell penetrates the mother's ovum, the basic genetic material, the DNA of each unite to create a totally unique new human being. At the time when the genetic qualities of the mother and father combine, all the major characteristics that will eventually exist when that new person is full-grown are already present. All the "instructions" for the development of the most complex form of life on earth, a new human person, are present in that newly fertilized ovum, the zygote, and instantly begin to guide a process of growth that will continue until the actual birth of the baby—and, in fact, throughout the person's life.

It is in light of the uniqueness, vitality, and "completeness," that exists from the conception of a new human being, that the students need to learn to view the practice of abortion and then evaluate the various rationales given to support this practice.

Despite superficial similarities, there is no real comparison between the development of the human person and other life forms, even in these early stages. The newly fertilized ovum, the zygote, is uniquely human from the time of fertilization. It does not go through preliminary lower stages of life before it begins to take on human characteristics as some suggest. Even the first cell divisions and the earliest clustering of new cells are uniquely human, oriented toward the full development of a human person. This new being is *not* a "potential human being," but is rather a "human being *with potential.*"

So it is simply not accurate to say, as some abortion advocates do, that we are not dealing with a human being in the earlier stages of a pregnancy. The question might be asked: "If the zygote is not a human being at his or her earliest stage of development, then what is it?" Nothing else is added at a later point to

transform the developing fetus into a human that is not already present and "alive" in that newly fertilized ovum.

Catholic Church teaching on this point is clear: "Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

Here is one word of advice. You don't have to be argumentative in presenting this material since the students probably will not have any argument with what you present. In presenting this material, allow the facts to speak for themselves. The miracle of the developing human person speaks powerfully against the practice of abortion. Helping the students understand the miracle is your goal in this lesson.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

- Distribute copies of the "How Old Were You When . . . " handout. Ask students to complete it as best they can.

- Ask students to share their answers. Allow them to explain or defend their answers when they are in disagreement with other students, but do not give the correct answers at this time.

- After students have shared their answers, explain as follows: "I will give the correct answers in a moment. But first, let's review some other ideas."

Present Main Ideas

- Begin by reviewing the main points of the previous lessons. You may ask students to help you identify them. They are as follows:

  a. All life is a precious miracle, deserving our respect.
  b. Human beings are the most unique and special of all.
  c. We are in danger of losing our respect for life, including human life, because of a kind of moral "pollution" in today's society.

- Now explain briefly these key facts about abortion using Handout 3.1.

  a. Perhaps the greatest way we have begun to lose respect for human life is by making the practice of abortion legal.
  b. Since 1973, when the Supreme Court issued its decision in the case *Roe v. Wade,* it has been legal for a mother to destroy the developing baby in her womb if she chooses to do so, any time during the first nine months of her pregnancy.
  c. The reason many people give to justify abortion is that, in these early stages of the pregnancy, you are not destroying a human being. They say the baby really isn't human, or a person, until it is born. Therefore, when you perform an abortion, you

are simply removing a "growth" from the mother's womb.

d. Each year 1.6 million babies are now killed by abortion in the United States. That is 190 abortions every hour!

e. Stress that up to 1973, when the *Roe v. Wade* decision was made, both law and medicine generally sought strongly to protect the lives of unborn children. The Court's 1973 decision introduced a major change into society, a change that thousands of people protest each year on January 23, the date the Supreme Court issued the decision.

f. Note that an action which is legal is not necessarily moral. Slavery was legal for a long time in the United States, but that fact did not make slavery moral.

• Having stated these facts, tell students that the real facts about how we grow and develop in our mother's womb give us a different picture.

Explore Further

• Tell the students that the Bible clearly views the development of human life unique from its very beginning and as God's special work. To show this, read verses 13–16 of Psalm 139.

• Now give out the handout, "First Days of Life." Go over the handout together, one item at a time. Allow students to ask questions. Clarify the meaning of any words unfamiliar to them. Add your own comments and observations to help students grasp the unique and truly marvelous way in which each of them developed. Take as much time as necessary.

• Now go over the opening quiz and have students find the correct answers, based on the information you just shared. They are as follows:

1. How old were you when you first learned to swim? (8 weeks)
2. How old were you when you turned your first somersault? (8 weeks)
3. How old were you when your heart began to beat for the first time? (25 days)

4. How old were you when you began to suck your thumb? (14 weeks)
5. How old were you when you received all the main qualities you will ever have? (30 minutes)
6. How old were you when you could first begin to feel and react to pain? (8 weeks)
7. How old were you when you could first hear sounds and music? (12 weeks)

Apply

• Distribute card-making materials (paper, magic markers, and such). Instruct students to make a "thank you" note for their parents, who nurture their life and growth today.

• Instruct students to take home the "First Days of Life" handout and study it for a test in the next class.

• Close by asking the children to close their eyes and imagine themselves in a warm, small, light-filled room. The walls of the room are bare, but a warm glow seems to come through the walls. Ask the children to hold onto this image while you read Psalm 139:13–16.

Optional Home Activity

• Tell students to ask their parents to help them study the "First Days of Life" handout. In the process, students should ask their parents to share any special memories regarding their feelings about becoming a parent.

Handout 3.1 January, 1973: *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*—A Summary

What did the Supreme Court decide in settling *Roe v. Wade?*

It ruled upon a question that the Court had not previously ruled upon before: the legal status of the unborn. In the *Roe v. Wade* decision the Supreme Court ruled that the unborn are not legal "persons." Because "legal personhood does not exist prenatally," according to the decision, the unborn are not due protection under the U.S. Constitution.

What are the results of the *Roe v. Wade* decision?

The results of the ruling were:

That there could be no legal restrictions on abortion during the first three months of pregnancy.

That after the first three months and up to the point of viability (that is, the ability of the unborn child to live on its own outside of the womb), the only restrictions on abortion could be those needed to make the procedure safer for the mother.

That an abortion at any time prior to birth is allowable if one licensed physician determined that it was necessary for the health, including emotional and psychological, of the mother.

What was a result of the *Doe v. Bolton* decision?

The Court allowed for an expanded legal definition of the word *health* in regard to abortion. It allowed that a doctor could determine that an abortion was necessary . . . "in the light of all factors—physical, psychological, familial, and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient. All these factors may relate to health" (*Doe v. Bolton,* U.S. Supreme Court, January, 1973). Thus, according to *Doe v. Bolton* abortion is allowable throughout the entire pregnancy.

What does the Catholic Church teach regarding these decisions? In reaffirming God's law against the taking of human life, the bishops of the United States say:

> *The child in the womb is human. Abortion is unjust destruction of a human life, and morally that is murder. . . . Abortion, the destruction of a living human being in the womb of its mother, is morally wrong. No law or judicial opinion can change the moral judgment. We are convinced that the decision of the Supreme Court is wrong and must be reversed ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 4; "Resolution on the Pro-Life Constitutional Amendment," no. 1).*

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Handout 3.2 How Old Were You When . . .

Instructions: Answer these questions as well as you can. If you aren't sure of an answer, make a guess.

1. How old were you when you first learned to swim?

2. How old were you when you turned your first somersault?

3. How old were you when your heart began to beat for the first time?

4. How old were you when you began to suck your thumb?

5. How old were you when you received all the main qualities you will ever have?

6. How old were you when you could first begin to feel and react to pain?

7. How old were you when you could first hear sounds and music?

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Handout 3.3 First Days of Life

In the First Half Hour of Your Life . . .

All the "instructions" for developing your entire body are present in the new and unique *you* that comes into existence at conception. The DNA of your mother's ovum and father's sperm cell unite, giving you all the major characteristics you will possess through your life—your sex, hair, eye and skin color, adult height, overall health traits, and even basic intellectual and personality traits. The complete "blueprint" of *you* is all there the moment you are conceived. Within two hours, the ovum divides into two cells according to the blueprint. You are on your way!

In the First Week . . .

By the fourth day, you have thirty-six cells, each with special "instructions" for developing a special organ or particular part of your body. You arrive and become implanted in the wall of your mother's womb. By the seventh day, you have over 150 very active cells.

In the First Month . . .

You grow faster during those first twenty-eight days than at any other time in your life. You grow to the size of half a pea. That sounds small but that is 10,000 times larger than the day you were conceived. Your head is formed—with eyes, ears, mouth, and brain. So are your kidneys, liver, and digestive tract. Your heart begins to beat on its own at about day 25 and begins to pump blood through your own blood vessels. The buds of your arms and legs appear. All this is happening and you are still smaller than the eraser on your pencil.

In the Second Month . . .

During the next twenty-eight days you really "take shape." Your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth develop in detail. Your muscles develop and become covered with skin. Your skeleton, in cartilage form, develops. Your arms, hands, and fingers, complete with fingerprints develop. Your legs have developed but your feet aren't quite complete yet. Your brain begins to send signals to the rest of your body. Your liver begins manufacturing blood. Your kidneys begin functioning and your stomach starts making digestive juices. You begin to respond to stimuli and to contract your muscles. You're quite an active little person who can swim and turn

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somersaults even though you're only fifty-six days old and only about an inch long!

In the Third Month . . .

By the end of the next twenty-eight days, you are virtually complete. Your nervous system and muscles work together. Your skeleton replaces cartilage with bone. You can frown, squint, and react to touch in various parts of your body. You can move your fingers and make a fist. You can move your toes and you can kick. You have vocal cords and could actually cry if you were outside the womb. You inhale and exhale, though it is amniotic fluid not air that you "breathe." You can swallow and digest. You now have fingernails. You have taste buds and saliva glands. You can begin to hear. Your sex organs and even your internal reproductive organs have formed. You even begin to have some facial characteristics you inherited from your mother and father. Yet by the end of this month, you are still less than three inches long!

In the Fourth Month . . .

From now on, it's mostly growing and practicing for you. You practice for the time you will breathe air, inhaling and exhaling amniotic fluid. You practice swallowing and begin to suck your thumb. You become quite athletic and you "exercise" your arms and legs. Your movements become quite smooth and graceful as your nerves and muscles begin to work closely together. And you grow. At the beginning of the fourth month, you are still less than three inches long. By the end of this month, you have become eight to ten inches tall. But you will still weigh about six ounces. Though you are already rather completely formed by the end of this month in terms of all the essentials, you are still too tiny and weak to be able to live outside the safety of your mother's womb. You've got five more months of growing to do.

In the Fifth and Sixth Months . . .

Mostly, you just gain weight and strength. You grow from six ounces to about twenty-six ounces. You also grow hair and eyebrows. Your skeleton continues to harden and your muscles get stronger. Your heart is now beating loudly enough that someone could hear it by placing an ear to your mother's abdomen. Your mother first begins to feel you move, about the beginning of the fifth month. But soon, she can feel you all the time as you move about. You sleep and wake at regular periods. You "jump" when you hear a loud noise. By the end of the fifth month, you could possibly live outside your mother's womb if you were given proper medical care.

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In the Last Three Months . . .

You spend most of your time growing. You alternate between regular sleeping time and time when you are awake and exercising. You gain most of your birth weight during these last three months, as much as six pounds or more. You develop a good layer of fat under your skin to protect you from the cold after birth. You grow taller in the process, to your full height of about twenty inches at birth. By the ninth month, there is very little room left for you in your mother's womb. You can no longer turn around or do somersaults. Toward the end of the ninth month, your head settles at the bottom of your mother's womb and you are ready to make your exit into the world.

That's how you—and every other human being—develops during the first days of life. From the moment of your conception you have all the elements that make you the unique person you are, even though you are smaller than this dot (.). In just thirty-eight short weeks, you grow from that single fertilized ovum to have your highly developed body with its wonderful brain which is more complex than the largest computer in the world. But during all those thirty-eight weeks in your mother's womb, there is never a time when you aren't *you,* a unique human person precious to God.

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Lesson Four Overview

Abortion and the Facts

Objective

Students will become familiar with the effects of abortion, as well as related statistical data on abortion practices.

Summary

In this lesson, students will review stages of fetal development, visualize abortion as the destruction of life, be briefly introduced to various abortion methods currently in use, and review statistical data concerning abortion. They will develop a "billboard" that challenges the practice of abortion.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Balloons, tape, a pin, newsprint or poster board, markers, student handouts

Procedure

A dynamic opening using balloons to illustrate the effect of abortion, input through handouts on the nature and effects of abortion, a "billboard project" done in small groups

Evaluation

The content contained in the "billboard project" will illustrate the students' grasp of the main concepts presented in the lesson.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Abortion, a Serious Issue (video)
In God's Image Series
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Note: For this age group it is not a good idea to show the more graphic presentations on abortion that are available.

Lesson Four

Teacher Background

Abortion and the Facts

In the first three lessons, these points have been stressed: All life is precious; human life is unique among all living things; the life of the human person begins at conception. It is against this background that the facts concerning abortion take on their full significance. In presenting these facts to this age group, however, be sensitive to their limitations and their sensibilities. The intention of this lesson is not to frighten the students. It is to help them realize that, regardless of how or why an abortion is performed, each abortion kills a living human person.

Define *abortion* in that way, as the intentional act of killing a developing human being while it is still within its mother's body. Without being too graphic, briefly refer to the procedures most often used. In the first three months, those who perform abortions will use either suction aspiration or dilation and curettage (D and C). In each of these instances, suction and cutting instruments are inserted inside the womb and used to dismember and remove the developing baby. After the first three months of pregnancy, when the baby is more fully developed, those who perform abortions will use *dilation and evacuation* or *saline injection.* In the former method (shown in the highly publicized video, *The Silent Scream),* the cervix is dilated and tools are used to dismember and remove the pieces of the baby. In the latter method, a solution is injected into the sac surrounding the baby. Within twenty-four to forty-eight hours later, the mother goes into labor and delivers a dead or dying baby.

For the baby, any form of abortion is obviously lethal. The mother is also at risk, both during and after the abortion. The womb can be injured and even punctured. Hemorrhaging is fairly common. Injuries and scars to the womb can prevent the mother from being able to have other babies in the future. But physical harm isn't the only risk to the mother. Women who have had abortions often experience serious emotional problems afterwards when they begin to realize and regret that they have destroyed their own baby. Depression, nightmares, extreme guilt, and

suicidal tendencies are some of the symptoms of this post-abortion syndrome.

The scope of the evil related to abortion is magnified when we realize that there are 1.6 million babies killed by abortions each year in the United States alone. Approximately 92 percent of these abortions are what are considered "abortions for social reasons." Only about 1 percent are performed because the mother was a rape victim. Slightly less than 7 percent are performed because the mother's life is in danger. In reviewing the statistics on the Facts Sheet, keep reminding the children that each number represents a living baby who was killed while still inside its mother's womb.

When properly presented, the facts regarding the nature and frequency of abortion will speak for themselves to this age group. Abortion, regardless of how or why it is performed, kills a developing baby inside its mother's womb. If you can help the students grasp that reality, they will be able to see for themselves why the Church has always opposed abortion and why any civilized society should.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Before class, mount on the board with the aid of masking tape six balloons. The first balloon should not be inflated. Each subsequent balloon should be slightly more inflated, with the sixth balloon being fully inflated. Over each balloon write in sequence, beginning with the first: One Day, Four Weeks, Eight Weeks, Twelve Weeks, Twenty Four Weeks, Newborn.

• Begin class by telling students that each balloon represents a baby at some stage in its development in its mother's womb, as indicated by the titles. Review what capabilities the developing baby has by asking students to tell you some of the qualities the baby possesses at each of the six stages. Refer to the information from the handout in the previous lesson. As students identify some of these qualities, write them down under the appropriate balloon.

• After you have adequately reviewed the material about fetal development from the previous lesson, pick up a small pin and stick it through each of the balloons in turn, beginning with number six (Newborn), and working backward.

Ask students this question: "In terms of destroying the balloon's ability to hold air, does it make any difference when the pin is stuck into it?"

(Answer: No.) Now make these observations:

a. Abortion is similar to what happened to the balloon.

b. Though the effect is more dramatic and obvious the further the baby is developed, at any stage of development an abortion kills a baby. Abortion has the same effect on the baby as killing it after birth would have.

Present Main Ideas

• Now distribute Handout 4.1, "Abortion Methods." Read through the handout with the students. Do not explain the methods in detail beyond those given on the sheet, in keeping with the students' sensitivities. You might point out, however, that it is believed that

as early as eight weeks the baby can begin to experience pain. It definitely can experience pain by the thirteenth week.

Explore Further

• Distribute the handout on Abortion Statistics. Go over and comment on each fact in turn. Stress that the statistics challenge the position of many pro-abortion advocates that most abortions are necessary either for the health of the mother or because she is too poor to care for the baby. More than half the abortions are, in fact, a form of birth control, "after the fact." Allow time for the students to ask questions.

Apply

• Form class into groups of three. Provide each group with scrap paper, one large piece of newsprint or poster board, and colored markers. Give the following instructions:

a. Imagine that your group has been appointed by the parish to design a billboard that depicts the evil of abortion.

b. Come up with a design for your billboard and decide on the best place to display it in the city.

• Allow time for students to design their billboards. Ask each group to display and explain its work and tell where they would place the billboard. Comment as necessary.

• Invite the class to settle into a prayerful mood. Pause until class becomes silent. Then make this observation: "Right now, throughout this country, thousands of young girls and women are in the process of deciding if they should have an abortion. Let us pray silently that they find the wisdom and the courage to reject that idea." Pause for silent prayer.

• Conclude with the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Loving and caring God, help all mothers who at this very minute may be considering aborting the child they carry

within their body. Enlighten them so they come to realize that in their womb at this moment is a unique human being who has a right to live and grow and join the human community. Give these mothers the courage to choose to bring their child to birth. Finally, teach us how we can best support these mothers in their time of need. We pray this in the name of Jesus, Your Son. Amen.

Optional Home Activity

- Invite students to bring home and discuss with parents and other family members the two handouts from this class.

- If you plan to give a quiz on this material, tell students to ask their parents to help them study the two handouts.

Handout 4.1 Abortion Methods

Definition: *Abortion,* as described in this handout, refers to the intentional removal of the developing human being from the mother's womb before he or she can live outside the womb, thereby killing the baby.

Methods During the First Three Months of the Baby's Life

1. Suction Aspiration—A method in which strong suction is used to remove the baby from the womb.

2. Dilatation and Curettage (also referred to as D and C)—A method in which surgical tools are used to cut away and remove the baby from the wall of the mother's womb.

Methods After the Baby is Three Months Old

1. Dilatation and Evacuation—A method in which special tools are used to take apart the baby's body and remove it from the womb. This method is not used after the baby has reached four and a half months of age.

2. Saline Injection—For babies older than fourteen weeks, a method in which a salt solution is injected into the sac inside the mother's womb, which causes the mother to go into labor and deliver a dead (or dying) baby within twenty-four to forty-eight hours later.

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Handout 4.2 Some Important Statistics about Abortion

1. In 1973, two Supreme Court decisions, *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton,* made it possible for a woman to legally obtain an abortion, for any reason, during the full nine months of pregnancy. Since that date 26 million (26,000,000) unborn children have been "legally" killed in the United States.

2. Each year, 1.6 million (1,600,000) babies are killed by abortion in the United States.

3. Each day, 4,000 babies are killed by abortion in the United States. That's approximately 190 babies every hour.

4. Approximately 92 percent of the abortions performed each year were done for "social" reasons. Less than 7 percent were done out of concern for the mother's physical or psychological health, and less than 1 percent because she was a victim of rape or incest.

5. The majority (59.2 percent) of mothers who have abortions are between ages 15–24. The majority (66.4 percent) of mothers who have abortions are from white, middle-class families.

6. Seventy-two and eight-tenths percent of all abortions are performed on unmarried mothers.

7. For every 1,000 babies born in the United States, 356 are killed by voluntary abortion before birth.

8. Forty-five percent of those who seek an abortion have had a previous abortion.

9. Approximately 45 percent of all abortions are performed after the baby has lived in its mother's womb more than eight weeks and is clearly recognizable as a human being, in whom all the organs are fully formed, brain waves are present, and whose heart has been beating for five weeks.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

Abortion is and has always been considered a serious violation of God's law. Those who obtain an abortion, those who persuade others to have an abortion, and those who perform the abortion procedures are guilty of breaking God's law. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 7)

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Lesson Five
Overview

Abortion and the Right to Life

Objective

The students will learn why abortion, even though it is legal, violates the most fundamental of all human rights, the right to life.

Summary

In this lesson, students will become familiar with the arguments which those who are pro-abortion use to defend the practice of abortion and will discover the inconsistencies and errors contained in those arguments. They will relate the abortion issue to the larger question of fundamental human rights for all human beings.

Time

30–45 minutes

Procedure

Introductory worksheet and discussion, teacher input, an imaginary case study, and group participation in the preparation of a letter to the students' government representative (Note: Before undertaking this activity, inform parents and obtain their consent if a letter is actually sent.)

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts

Evaluation

The students will demonstrate their grasp of the topic by preparing an appropriate letter to send to their government representative.

Resources for Lesson Enrichment

Mother Tiger, Mother Tiger (film)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

"Their Lives—A Single Issue" (pamphlet)
National Right to Life Education Trust
419 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Lesson Five

Teacher Background

Abortion and the Right to Life

The usual arguments given by those who are pro-abortion fall into two general categories. Those who are pro-abortion maintain that the baby is not yet a baby, but is only a "growth" or a bundle of cells in the mother's womb. They maintain that the developing baby has no rights and that it remains the mother's right to decide what to do with her own body and with her baby as long as it is still growing inside her body.

In presenting reasons that those who are pro-abortion give, be careful not to judge their motives. We really cannot determine personal motives. Unfortunately, out of ignorance, many of those who are pro-abortion are probably quite sincere in their belief that what they do is morally acceptable. Therefore, focus instead on the fallacies of pro-abortion arguments rather than on those who present these arguments.

As the Church teaches, and as scientific observation demonstrates, from conception onward we are observing the unique development of a unique human being. Given the almost miraculous nature of this development (as described in lesson three), we can hardly say that the mother simply has a "growth" inside her or a random glob of meaningless cells. An abortion at any stage of pregnancy destroys a developing human being.

It is in the light of that fact that we need to view the argument regarding the mother's right over her own body. It is society's obligation to protect the rights of all its people, especially those least able to protect themselves. The most sacred of these rights, of course, is the right to life. It is common sense to say that a mother violates her baby's right to life if she kills it after it is born.

Since the baby is already a human being while still inside its mother's womb, it is also common sense to say that the mother violates the baby's right to life if she has an abortion which kills the baby while still inside her. Those who seek to make abortion illegal are simply seeking to protect the unborn baby's right to

life in the same way that we now protect the baby's right to life after it is born.

In explaining this to the students, keep your arguments simple. This age group can instinctively recognize the unfairness of a law that allows mothers to kill their babies while still inside the womb but forbids them to do so a few months later when the baby is outside the womb. It is the same baby in both cases and the baby's right to life is involved in both cases.

It helps to compare the rights of the unborn, who are unable to protect themselves, to the way we now strive to protect the rights of other defenseless persons. We have many laws designed to protect persons who are mentally disabled, the feeble elderly, small children, and so forth. We now have more laws to protect the rights of animals (dogs, cats, lab animals) than we have laws to protect the rights of the unborn baby. The students will be quick to see the inconsistency and injustice in this kind of thinking in our society.

Remind the students that the Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge. "Hence it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

In short, to the degree that you can help the students recognize that the unborn baby, at every stage in its development, as a human person with the same right to life as all other human beings, the easier it will be for the students to grasp the radical injustice of our present abortion laws. It will also be easier for them to appreciate why the Church, in opposing abortion, is supporting the most fundamental right of all—the right to life.

As the Bishops of the United States have said, "The assertion is made that a woman has a right not to be forced to bear a child against her will, but when a woman is already pregnant, this right must be considered in light of the child's right to life, the woman's responsibilities as its mother, and the rights and responsibilities of the child's father. The life of the unborn child is a human life. The destruction of any human life is not a private matter, but the concern of every responsible citizen." ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 22, 1970)

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin class by distributing Handout 5.1, "Worksheet." Review the list at the top of the sheet, briefly explaining each item. Then ask students to complete the worksheet. After sufficient time, invite students to share their answers. Summarize the exercise with these two conclusions:

a. It is the obligation of governments to pass laws that insure that the rights of all its citizens are protected, especially those least able to protect themselves.
b. In order to protect the rights and common good of all citizens, governments can pass laws that restrict certain individual rights.

Present Main Ideas

• Begin by explaining that those who support abortion use two main arguments:

a. At least in the early stages of pregnancy, they say, all that is present in the mother is a "glob of cells." Even later in pregnancy, they say that you are not dealing with a human being until the baby is developed enough that it can live outside its mother's womb.
b. They also say that the mother has the right to decide what is best for her, physically, emotionally, economically, and socially. If a government would outlaw abortion, it would be taking away the mother's right over her own body.

• Having stated these two arguments, ask students to react to each in turn with questions like these: "What do you think about the idea that the baby within the mother is not yet a human being? Do you think the mother has an inalienable right to abort her baby?" Based on the nature of their responses you will gain a good insight into their present understanding of the issue.

• Proceed as necessary to correct and/or expand on this understanding as discussed in the Teacher Background Essay. Stress two points in the process. First, the pregnant mother carries a unique human

being within her from the moment of conception on, as has been discussed in previous lessons. Second, this unique human being has the same basic right to life and all related rights that belong to every human being as created by God. The fact that the baby presently must live within its mother's womb does not give the mother the right to ignore the baby's rights.

Then go on to further explain that governments have the duty to protect the rights of their weakest citizens, as seen in the opening exercise. Give further examples as necessary and ask students to share some from their own experience.

Conclude by stressing that no citizens are weaker or need more protection than our youngest citizens, the unborn children. Therefore, to argue that legalized abortion is necessary to protect the rights of the mother is basically unfair because it totally denies and destroys the rights of another human being, namely the unborn child.

Explore Further

- Form class into groups of three. Distribute a copy of Handout 5.2, "Advice Column." Direct groups to discuss and then write a response to the letter.

- After groups have completed their letters, invite them to read the finished product to the class. Ask class to react to each letter by identifying what they think are the most persuasive ideas contained in it. Add your own affirming observations, but point out possible inaccuracies if any are present.

Apply

- Invite the class as a group to compose a letter that can be sent to their representatives in the State and Federal House of Representatives and Senate. The purpose of the letter would be to urge their representative to support legislation designed to abolish or at least further curtail the present legality of abortion on demand—or to thank their representative for opposing abortion. (Note: Be sure to obtain parental consent if the letter is actually sent to the representative.)

• Have students identify the key ideas they want to include in the letter, based on what they have learned about abortion so far in this unit. Give the students Handout 5.3, as an aid to helping them identify key ideas. List their key ideas on the board when the total class agrees they should be in the letter. After all the ideas have been identified, ask for a volunteer, or have the class choose a student, to write a draft of the letter for the next class. (Assist this student as necessary.)

• Close the class by inviting each student to name (publicly or silently) one person they know whose rights might be violated if the government did not protect them (for example, a physically or mentally disabled person, an elderly person, a member of a minority). Then offer this or some similar prayer:

> *Loving God and Ruler of us all, please guide our government leaders with Your wisdom so they may know how best to protect the rights of all people with the laws they make, especially the weak and the unborn. Give them the courage to make these decisions even if they lose popularity with some groups by doing so. Help us also, God, to grow up to become good citizens who are willing to speak out in defense of the rights of all people, especially the weak and unborn. We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to share the ideas of this class with their parents and encourage their parents to write a similar letter to their representatives, supporting the rights of the unborn.

Handout 5.1 Worksheet—Supporting Human Rights

Emancipation Proclamation
Handicapped Parking Only
Medicaid and Medicare for the Elderly
Special Olympics
Mandatory Braille Numbers on Elevators
Free Day-Care Centers for the Poor Working Mothers
Equal Employment Opportunities Regardless of Race, Sex, or Religion

Questions—After considering the list of laws and practices given on this worksheet, answer the following questions:

1. What do you think all these laws and practices have in common?

2. If you personally know a person whose rights are protected by the law or practice, put an X behind that law or practice.

3. Do you think any of your own personal rights are unfairly taken away by supporting and following these laws and practices?

4. List as many similar laws and practices as you can which are designed to protect the rights of persons with a disability.

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Handout 5.2 Advice Column

Instructions: You write an advice column entitled "Here's the Answer" for your diocesan paper. You receive the following letter. Prepare a letter in response.

Dear "Here's the Answer,"

I have a friend who is pregnant and unmarried and is planning to have an abortion. She insists that what she has within her womb isn't really a baby yet since she is only 8 weeks pregnant. She also says that she has a right to get an abortion because it is her body and her life. She says that if she had the baby she would have to drop out of school for a semester and wouldn't be able to graduate with her class. She feels that wouldn't be fair. I think abortion is wrong, but I don't know how to answer her. What should I say?

Signed, Confused in Coles Corners

Your Response

Dear Confused:

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Handout 5.3 In Summary: The Church's Teachings on Unborn Children and the Right to Life

. . . Human life is a precious gift from God. . . . Recognition of the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, lies at the very heart of our individual and social duty to respect human life. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," no. 2)

. . . No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human life (Jas 4:1–2). When we accept violence in any form as commonplace, our sensitivities become dulled. . . . Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284)

Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

Scientists tell us that, from the moment of conception, the child is a complete and rapidly growing being, endowed with the characteristics of human life. Although dependent on a privileged environment for development, the child in the womb has a life of its own. . . . The child in the womb is human. ("Declaration on Abortion," nos. 1, 4)

Abortion is and has always been considered a serious violation of God's law. Those who obtain an abortion, those who persuade others to have an abortion, and those who perform the abortion procedures are guilty of breaking God's law. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 7)

. . . . The life of the unborn child is a human life. The destruction of any human life is not a private matter, but the concern of every responsible citizen. ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 22, 1970)

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Lesson Six Choose Life

Overview

Objective

The students will identify various ways in which they can personally begin to become involved in pro-life and related activities.

Summary

In this lesson, students will see that the pro-life movement embraces a variety of related activities. It not only opposes abortion, it promotes chastity as a prime way of preventing abortion. It seeks to give practical help to persons experiencing problem pregnancies, both during and after the pregnancy. There are many groups and organizations committed to the pro-life movement throughout the country, each providing a variety of services.

Time

30–45 minutes.

Teacher Preparation/Materials

An egg (perhaps hard-boiled), a large stiff piece of cardboard, student handouts, several local phone books, a Bible

Procedure

An opening dynamic to illustrate the need for community cooperation, teacher input, completion of a worksheet for identifying possible actions, and completion of a student pledge card

Evaluation

The nature and practicality of the students' pledge cards will illustrate if they have understood the nature of their own responsibility to help promote the pro-life movement.

Resources for Lesson Enrichment

The White Star Garage (film)
Paulist Productions
P. O. Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

You Can Make a Difference (video)
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Lesson Six

Teacher Background

Choose Life

In this lesson, you want to help the students realize that they have both the ability and the responsibility to help overcome the injustice of our present abortion laws and practices. There are several dimensions to this pro-life activity of the Church. As has been mentioned in the earlier lessons, a pro-life stance should be rooted in a consistent ethic of life which calls us to promote all human rights, to respect all life, and to respect sexuality and its life-giving power.

A prime way of promoting the pro-life position, therefore, is to promote chastity. Fifty percent of all abortions are sought by young unwed women. The need for these abortions could be eliminated by the practice of chastity. Those who truly value life value sexuality and its life-giving power. They show their reverence for life by promoting and practicing chastity. It is the best alternative to abortion prior to pregnancy.

The Church's pro-life stance also calls us to help all those who might be tempted to consider an abortion as the solution to an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. We need to help provide them with alternative solutions. We need to help mothers with these "problem pregnancies" obtain the medical, financial, and emotional support they require both during and after the pregnancy. We need to help promote adoption as an alternative, especially for young unwed mothers. As a community, we have the obligation to insure that babies born with severe mental or physical disabilities are guaranteed proper care.

Additionally, we need to help the public at large to recognize that, at every stage of the pregnancy, the mother is carrying a unique human person within her, a person who has the same right to life as a baby already born.

In presenting these ideas to the students, it is good to give examples of local programs which the Church and other pro-life groups are providing to help mothers and families deal with "problem pregnancies" both during pregnancy and after birth. In short, help them recognize that the pro-life movement is much more

than an "anti-abortion organization." It is a very positive movement that is motivated by deep concern for both the life of the unborn baby and for the well-being of the mother.

Also, you will need to help the students identify practical actions which they might pursue, given their limited capacities, to effect change in society at their age. If they can identify and pursue even one activity, no matter how simple it is, this involvement will lay the foundation for a life-long commitment to participate with the Church in its struggle to stop the killing of millions of unborn babies every year throughout the world.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin class by asking for four volunteers. Instruct each to hold one corner of a very stiff piece of cardboard or wood approximately 2 feet by 2 feet in size. (Note: Do not use a material that bends easily.) After the four have grasped the corners of the board, place an egg (perhaps hard-boiled) in the middle of the board and instruct them to attempt to carry the ball on the board to the rear of the class and back, as fast as they can, without dropping it. Explain that you will time them. Then ask a second group of volunteers to see if they can beat the first group's time. Repeat as often as desired.

Present Main Ideas

• After students are seated again, tell them that the egg represents an unborn child and the board represents its mother. Explain that the effort to balance the egg on the board illustrates that many people need to share the responsibility of helping the unborn children and their mothers who might be tempted to seek an abortion in our society. It is the responsibility of the Church, of the government, of families, and of each of us as individuals. These are the "four corners" in the exercise.

In this context, explain that there are many dimensions to the pro-life movement in the Church. The Church doesn't just oppose abortion. It seeks to help the mother both during and after her pregnancy. This care includes everything from counseling to medical care to providing a place for unwed or homeless mothers to live during their pregnancy. The Church actively promotes adoption services as an alternative to abortion. It seeks to provide help and care for children born with handicaps as well as to provide assistance to the parents of these children. Government, and we as individuals, need to help in all these works.

• Stress that closely related to the pro-life movement, is the Church's promotion of the Gospel's teaching on chastity. Unwed mothers seek more abortions than any other group. If young people could be encouraged

to practice chastity in our society, and could be supported in their efforts, a major cause of abortions would be eliminated.

• Comment that many who do seek abortions truly believe that the baby within them is just a "glob of cells" and not a unique human being. That's why a major effort of the Church is to educate people in general and pregnant women in particular that a human person is developing within the womb from the moment of conception on.

Explore Further

• Distribute Handout 6.1, "National Pro-Life Organizations." Explain, in general terms, the difference between political action/lobbying, direct action, public education, and direct services:

1. Political action/lobbying: seeks to effect changes in present abortion laws.
2. Public education uses media, publications, lectures, and rallies to promote public awareness regarding the nature of abortion and to gain public support of a pro-life stance.
3. Direct services are services provided directly to the pregnant woman, the father, the family, and the baby before and/or after birth.

• After reviewing the list on the handout, divide students into their small groups and provide each group with a local phone book. Point out to students that many pro-abortionists claim that abortion is a "Catholic" issue. This claim is untrue. There are many other religious organizations and concerned groups who also actively oppose abortion. Instruct them to try to find as many pro-life organizations/services as they can that are listed in the phone book. Have each group report its findings. Based on these reports, compile a complete list on the board. Instruct students to copy the list onto their handout in the space indicated.

Apply

• Distribute Handout 6.2, "What Can You Do?" Ask students to work alone at first. Then allow them to work in small groups in which they share ideas with each other, adding new ideas to their own lists in the

process. Finally, have groups share with the total class. (Note: Before the oral presentation, teachers should review and edit the responses.) Again, students should add any new ideas to their own list so that, at the end, each student has essentially the same list of possible activities.

• Now ask each student to look over his/her list and then complete the bottom section of the handout by choosing one or two of the action ideas contained in the list.

• After all have completed their task, gather class for prayer. Invite students to pause and become quiet. Read Deuteronomy 30:15–16, 19–20. Invite students to read over their promise silently. Then conclude with the following or similar prayer:

> *Dear God and Source of All Life,*
> *We ask that You give us generosity so we will be able to reach out with care and concern to all those mothers for whom the birth of their child may require great sacrifice and hardship. Help us with Your courage and wisdom so that we will know how to promote Your truth about the dignity and rights of every unborn child from conception onward. Help us discover how to combat the errors about abortion so common in our society, while respecting those who are presently blinded by those errors. We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus, who died so that all people might live in freedom and dignity. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Ask the students to take home the two handouts to share with their parents. Suggest that the students invite their parents to also consider an appropriate way to become active in the pro-life movement, if they are not active already.

Handout 6.1

Code: A = political action/lobbying
B = public education
C = direct service

National Pro-Life Organizations

National Right to Life Committee, Inc.
419 7th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004 A, B, C

Right To Life Education Committee
902 Cherry, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506 B

Christian Action Council
701 W. Broad Street
Falls Church, VA 22046 A, B, C

Americans against Abortion
Box 70
Lindale, TX 75771 A, B, C

National Pro-Family Coalition
721 Second Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002 A, B

Americans United For Life
343 S. Dearborn
Suite 1804
Chicago, IL 60604 A, B

Crisis Pregnancy Counseling Programs

Alternatives to Abortion, International (AAI)
46 N. Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701

Bethany Christian Services
Telephone: 800–Bethany

Birthright International
Telephone: 800–848–Love

Family Life Service/Save A Baby
Telephone: 800–368–3336

Post-Abortion Counseling and Adoption Services

WEBA (Women Exploited by Abortion)
PO Box 267
Schoolcraft, MI 49087

Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline
4742 N. Sheffield Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211

National Committee for Adoption
2025 M Street, NW
Suite 512
Washington, DC 20036

Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Avenue, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The American Adoption Agency
1611 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Third Floor
Washington, DC 20009

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Project Rachel
National Office of Post Abortion
Reconciliation and Healing
3501 So. Lake Drive
PO Box 07477
Milwaukee, WI 53207–0477

Adoption Option
PO Box 429327
Cincinnati, OH 45242

National Teens for Life
2785 High Peak Rd.
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Associations

American Life League, Inc.
PO Box 1350
Stafford, VA 22554

Instructions: See if you can find, in your local phone book, the phone numbers and addresses of local branches of these and/or any other pro-life organizations. Look in both the white and yellow pages. If you find any, list them here:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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Handout 6.2 What Can You Do?

Instructions: In each of the areas below, list as many possible ways as you can think of that students your age might be able to do something to help in the pro-life movement.

Help change the present abortion laws.

Help educate others about the evil of abortion and alternatives to abortion.

Help promote chastity and the idea that sex should be reserved for marriage.

Help needy mothers care for themselves and their babies before birth.

Help needy mothers care for themselves and their babies after birth.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

. . . . Society's responsibility to ensure and protect human rights demands recognition and protection of the right to life as antecedent to all other rights and the necessary condition for their realization. It is unlikely that efforts to protect other rights will ultimately be successful if life itself is continually diminished in value. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-life Activities: A Reaffirmation," no. 7)

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My Personal Pro-Life Pledge

I promise to do the following to help promote respect for the life of the unborn child:

Signed _____

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Appendix: Fetal Development Visuals

The visuals in this section may be copied as additional handouts to increase students' understanding of the stages of human development in the womb.

First Month

Size: about 1/4 inch

The baby's heart is beating, and the brain is unmistakably human in proportion. The baby has eyes, ears, kidneys, a liver, a mouth and an umbilical cord.

Second Month

Size: about 1 1/2 inches

The baby's skeleton is complete. Her hands and fingers are beginning to form. She can move. The buds of milk (baby) teeth are appearing. Ankles, knees, and toes can be made out. Her brain waves can be measured on an EEG. The baby responds to touch.

Third Month

Size: about 3 inches

The baby is now clearly either a boy or a girl. If an object is placed in the palm of the baby's hand, he will grasp it. He can make a fist. By the end of this month, the baby's body is essentially built.

Fourth Month

Size: about 9 inches

The baby's brain has begun the maturing process that will not be completed until the baby is about fourteen years old. Right now, the baby is growing very rapidly. The eyelids are sealed together and won't open again until about the seventh month. The baby's body is covered with fine downy hair. Fingernails and toenails appear; fingers and toes have their own unique prints. The baby's mouth opens and closes and swallowing can be detected.

Fifth Month

Size: about 12 inches

The baby's eyelashes have become apparent. She has developed a sucking reflex and can suck her thumb.

Sixth Month

Size: about 14 inches

The baby continues to gain weight and grow longer. He can now respond to sound.

Seventh Month

Size: now weighs about 2 1/2 pounds

The baby's grip is perfected and is even stronger now than it will be shortly after birth. The hair on the baby's head is growing longer, and the downy covering on the rest of the body is disappearing. The baby's eyelids are open again.

Eighth Month

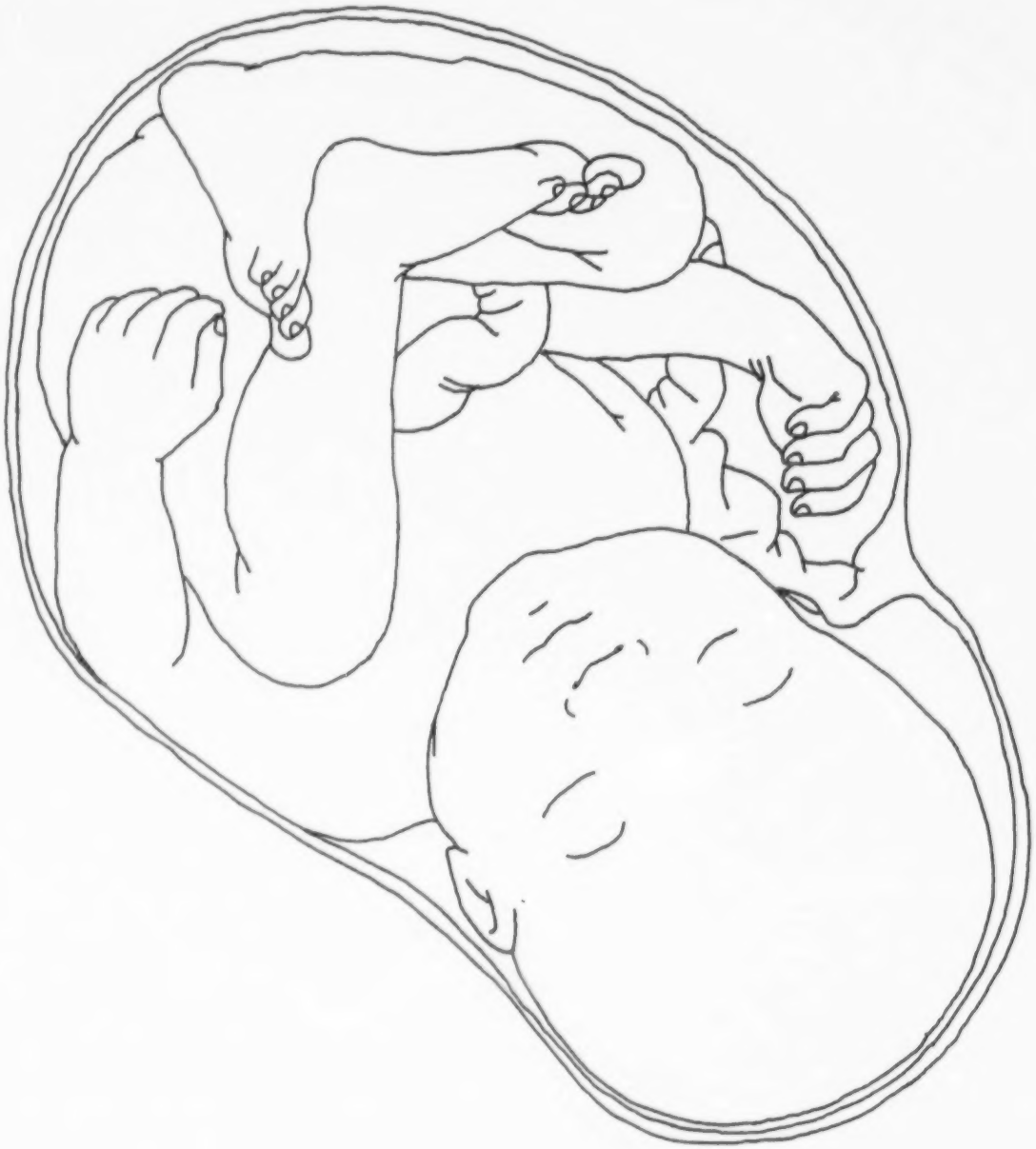
Size: weighs about 4 pounds

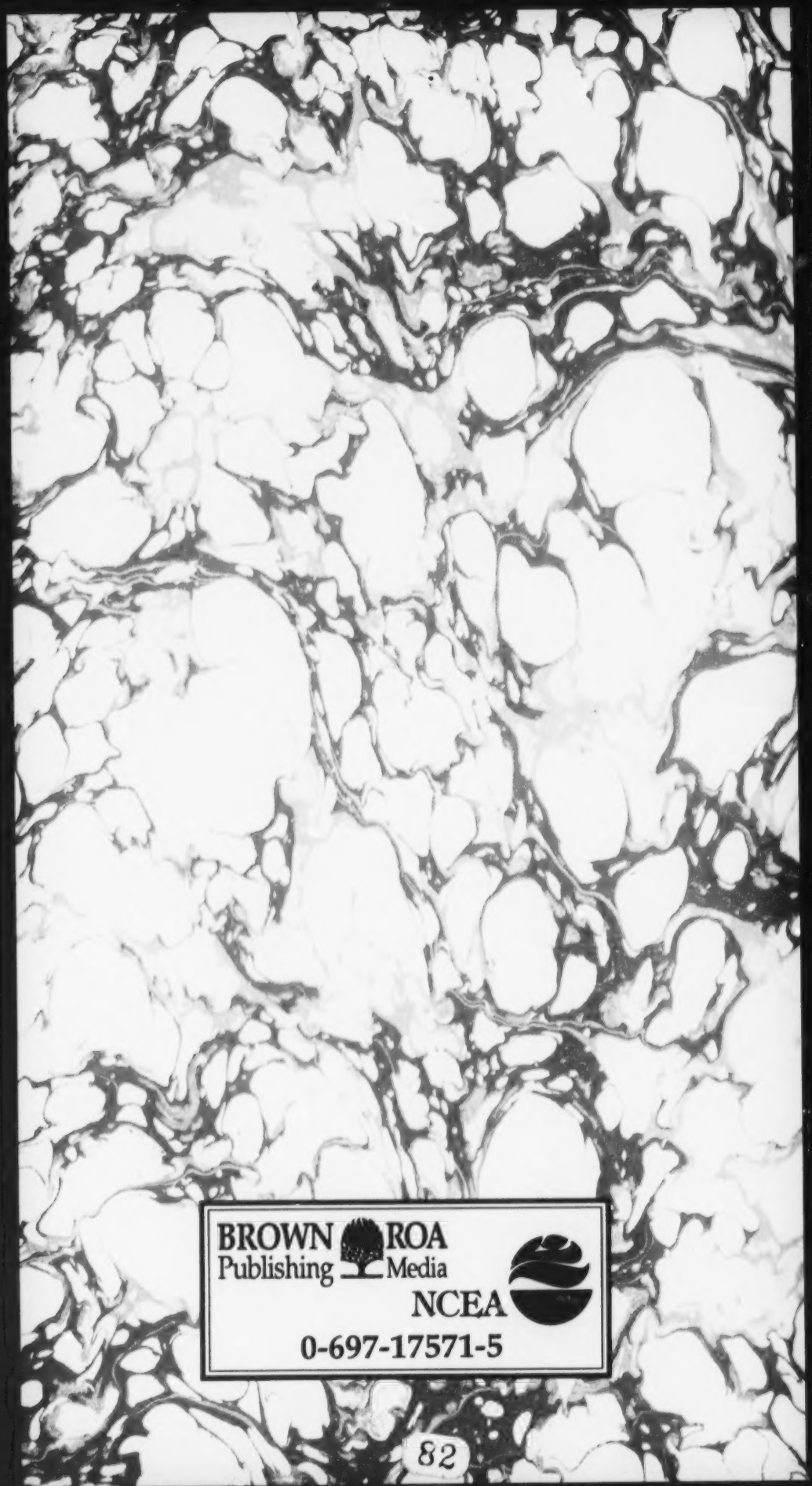
The baby continues to gain weight. He is also developing a protective padding of fat that will keep him warm after his birth.

Ninth Month

Size: weighs about 7 1/2 pounds

The baby is about twenty inches long. She has shifted her position in her mother's womb is nearly ready to be born. After birth, she will continue her human growth process for approximately the next seventy years.

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